DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 334 SO 017 169

AUTHOR	Wooster, Judith S., Ed.
TITLE	Social Studies in the Formative Years.
INSTITUTION	Association of Teachers of Social Studies, New York, N.Y.; United Federation of Teachers, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	86
NOTE	42p.
AVAILABLE FROM	United Federation of Teachers, 260 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010 ($1.50).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Viewpoints (120)
JOURNAL CIT	ATSS/UFT Journal; v42 n1 Spr 1986
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Citizenship Education; Curriculum Development; Educational Assessment; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Curriculum; Higher Education; *Social Studies; *State Curriculum Guides

ABSTRACT

This collection of eight articles was written to assist schools in rethinking and strengthening social studies programs, grades K-6. The articles offer practical suggestions for classroom teachers, social studies supervisors, and other professionals who have responsibility for planning and implementing programs. The issue begins with an article by Linda Biemer in which she builds a strong case for meaningful social studies programs at the elementary level and lists important goals for effective programs. The second article by Eileen Neeson outlines the process by which a school or district can create materials to support and implement the New York State Social Studies Program. The third article by Jerry M. Schulman presents a step-by-step model useful in designing content/concept/skills-focused activities. The fourth article by Florence Jackson urges elementary social studies teachers to focus on helping students develop a global perspective and global citizenship skills and attitudes. The fifth article by Judith S. Wooster presents three approaches to teaching for concept learning. The sixth article by Gloria Sesso offers model lessons in which skill instruction plays an integral role in delivering content and concept goals. The seventh article by Michael G. Fischer calls for expanding and strengthening the scope of evaluation and offers evaluation strategies that go beyond low level recall to assess content, concept and skill goals. The final article by Wayne Mahood outlines six strategies to help the profession prepare and retain high quality elementary social studies teachers. (RSL)

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SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS

by

Judith Wooster, Editor

1986

SO017169

ATSS UFT JOURNAL

VOL. XLII, NO. 1

SPRING 1986

IN THIS ISSUE

SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS

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The ATSS/UFT JOURNAL is published periodically throughout the school year, by the Association of Teachers of Social Studies of the United Federation of Teachers. Each issue will try to address itself to a major problem and concern that confronts social studies teachers everywhere.

JOURNALARTICLES

Articles relating to the field of social studies education may be contributed by any high school or college teacher, or administrator. Articles should be clearly typed and forwarded to:

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Single copies of the JOURNAL may be purchased by non-members of the UFT for $1.50 per copy to cover handling and mailing costs. The ATSS/UFT JOURNAL is reproduced and catalogued in ERIC/ChESS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction.....3

Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School: NOT a Trivial Pursuit, and NOT in Pursuit of Trivia
Dr. Linda Biemer.....4

Developing Classroom Materials To Support The Revised New York State Social Studies Program.....8
Eileen Neeson

Developing Participation Projects
J.M. Schulman.....16

Meeting the Challenge: Educating for Citizenship: A Global Perspective
Florence Jackson.....19

Teaching for Concept Learning in Elementary Social Studies
Judith S. Wooster.....22

Teaching for Skill Development in Elementary Social Studies
Gloria Sesso.....27

Testing What we Teach
Michael G. Fischer.....31

Like a "Little" Garlic or Pregnancy: Preparing and Retaining the Best Elementary Social Studies Teachers
Dr. Wayne Mahood.....35

IN THIS ISSUE . . . . .

Elementary school social studies is again receiving attention in elementary school classrooms. In June, 1982, New York State distributed the New York State Social Studies Program K-6. More recently, the New York State Board of Regents voted to begin evaluating elementary social studies programs statewide in the Spring, 1987. Thus, with this renewed emphasis in elementary school social studies, it is the aim of this issue to assist schools in rethinking and strengthening social studies programs, K-6.

As editors, we hope that its articles will offer practical suggestions for classroom teachers, social studies supervisors and other professionals who have responsibility for planning and implementing programs. We asked Judith S. Wooster, an associate at the Bureau of Social Studies Education, New York State Education Department, to be the guest editor of this issue. As you read these articles, you will soon realize that all social studies teachers owe her a big thanks.

The issue begins with an article by Linda Biemer in which she builds a strong case for meaningful social studies programs at the elementary level. Her rationale suggests important goals for effective programs.

Eileen Neeson shares her experience as a curriculum developer in her article which outlines the process by which a school or district can create materials to support and implement the New York State Social Studies Program.

Jerry Schulman assists teachers in planning Participation Projects by presenting a step-by-step model useful in designing these content/concept/skills-focused activities recommended in the New York State Social Studies Program K-6.

Florence Jackson urges elementary social studies teachers to focus on helping students develop a global perspective and global citizenship skills and attitudes. She offers specific activities and strategies to accomplish these important global goals.

Judith Wooster presents three approaches to teaching for concept learning and contends that elementary social studies programs that focus on concepts give students powerful tools for lifelong learning.

Gloria Sesso offers model lessons in which skill instruction plays an integral role in delivering content and concept goals.

Michael Fischer's article calls for expanding and strengthening the scope of evaluation in social studies. He offers examples of evaluation strategies that go beyond low level recall to assess content, concept and skill goals.

Finally, Wayne Mahood outlines six strategies to help our profession prepare and retain high quality elementary social studies teachers.

It is critical for all teachers of social studies K-12 to understand key issues in elementary social studies education. This issue of the ATSS Journal is an attempt to assist in that effort.

Editors

TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: NOT A TRIVIAL PURSUIT, AND NOT IN PURSUIT OF TRIVIA

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Unfortunately, social studies is often seen as trivia -- dates, names, places, battles, capital cities; and as a trivial pursuit -- one of the frills of elementary school -- that is, not necessary, as reading and math are. And even when it is taught, students rank it low among school subjects.

According to a study completed back in 1949 by Arthur Jersild and Ruth Tasch, students reported that, although social studies topics were of high interest to them, social studies, as a classroom subject, was low on their scale. Students in the upper elementary grades like social studies less than any other subject and, at the same time, perceive it to be one of the most difficult..."because of all the dates, names and places you have to learn."

Sadly enough, John Goodlad's study of the last few years, published in book form as A Place Called School, reached conclusions similar to those of Jersild and Tasch, leaving Goodlad to remark that "something strange seems to have happened to social studies topics on the way to the classroom...the topics of study become removed from their intrinsically human character, reduced to the dates and places readers will recall memorizing for tests." -- That is to say, social studies became trivia.

Social studies needs to be emphasized in the elementary grades for several key reasons. Each reason is illustrated by some classroom examples.

To Understand Self and Others:

In social studies class, children learn to understand themselves and how they fit into the larger worlds in which they live. The more children learn about others, the more they learn about themselves. As we all know, young children are extremely egocentric. Their world is the family, and for many nowadays, also their after-school "child-care family." In social studies, we can learn about other families within the children's communities, or in the world at large. We study the world at-large through the study of families. We can also include social studies concepts -- such as role. What are the different roles different family members have in different societies? How are they like us and how are they different from us? We can learn how members of families respond to the needs of others, perhaps because of their roles. We help children learn how to get along with other people, to break down their egocentrism and understand why helping others helps society. Here we can interject the concept of interdependence, whether it be in the family setting, the classroom, or in the world scene.

To Develop Global Awareness:

Learning about and accepting differences in our own classroom helps children in developing a cultural and global awareness right from an early age. New York, more than many other states, is indeed a pluralistic society and children need to learn about that cultural pluralism. Within just the last ten years, New York State's population has changed quite a bit with the increase in immigration of people from Southeast Asia, the Middle East

and the Latin American nations. The minority enrollment in New York's elementary and secondary schools increased from 27% in 1970 to 33% in 1980, just ten years later. That is, one out of three students is from a minority group. As of 1980, 18% of all New Yorkers over age 5 spoke a language other than English at home.

It is in the social studies class that we can not only assist these new immigrants in fitting into American society while retaining their own customs, but also aid the other children in classes to be accepting of their new classmates. We need to end prejudice at an early age and to rid children of their ethnocentrism at an early age, too. We can do this in social studies class by studying the similarities and differences of each others' cultures while at the same time developing a respect for differences.

The concepts of prejudice, discrimination and ethnocentrism, all key social studies concepts, are easily introduced into the elementary classes. Because we often have several different cultures represented in each class, we can get away from a simple comparing "theirs" with "ours," still the predominant Anglo culture, as we have tended to do when studying just one other culture.

To Develop Problem-Solving Skills:

Learning how to learn should be the goal of all teaching, not just social studies teaching. Social studies can help children learn how to be problem-solvers through the use of inquiry teaching and learning. As we all know, children have a natural curiosity when they enter school; however, school seems to take some of that away with our emphasis on the "right answer." In social studies, unfortunately, we do not always have the right answer. We don't know, for example, how to deal with the massive social security system fairly or how to reduce the deficit. These issues and others offer real world opportunities for problem solving.

Coping with life's crises and difficulties also relates to problem-solving. Children come to school from homes with problems; a serious illness of a parent or sibling; death in the family; separation or divorce of parents and perhaps the later remarriage and acceptance of a stepparent and maybe step siblings; moving from one home to another; unemployment of a parent; child or spousal abuse, either violent or sexual; or pollution near the home because of a toxic waste dump, a junk yard, an airport or a noisy factory. Social studies is the area of study in which we can intellectually, as well as emotionally, deal with these problems and actually study them.

The use of problem-solving through inquiry involves all the thought processes. Inquiry is a learning process. It provides students with the skills of questioning, observing, data collecting, categorizing, developing hypotheses, and drawing conclusions. Problem-solving also involves children in group work, another value of social studies, helping them to learn how to work together.

Social studies should be a "doing" class; not just a "knowing" class. We all learn more by doing, that is, active learning as opposed to passive learning. In social studies, using inquiry, problem solving is an active learning process. For example, in a unit on the history of our community, let's not just read someone else's generalizations about our community, but let's problem solve: how can we learn about our community? Let the kids answer: and go from there, following up on their suggestions. Some of the responses might be - "We can ask older people," "We can visit the cemetery," "We could go to the historical society," "We could find old maps in the library," and so on. Well, let's take one of those -- going to the cemetery. Look at all the information there: names, dates of birth and death, size of stone, amount of engraving, location within cemetery... all types of data with which to play around and, to study in solving the problems of what is the history of our community.

To Develop Critical Thinking Skills:

Dealing with the "why" questions and not just the "whats" is part of social studies because in our field we don't always have the clear-cut answer. Our field is real in that it does deal with life's questions and questions that really do impinge on a child's life. Our content lends itself so easily to the whys: why did the factory lay off my father? (economics); why do men have to fight wars? (political science); why are the garbage collectors on strike? (economics, government); why did people move to our city in the 1800's? (history). Trying to answer these questions -- speculating -- is thinking, and helping children learn how to think critically is part of social studies, too.

School is a safe environment in which to figure out answers to hard questions; in effect, school is a laboratory. And because it is, we can play around with ideas.

To Foster Development of Other Key Skills:

Inquiry is not the only skill we teach in social studies. Other skills include those of interpretation, especially of maps, charts, graphs, and cartoons. Reading comprehension is a skill we teach in social studies, too. It's not just the prerogative of the reading/language arts teacher. Nor is writing. We teach writing in the content area -- social studies --too. Children can write letters to their "pretend grandparents" back in the "old country" telling them about life in this new world; children can develop a colonial newspaper by writing news and feature articles, want ads, editorials, and letters to the editor. And they can write "real" letters to the editor of the local newspaper complaining about the lack of a leash law or bicycle path, or thanking the city lawmakers for adding an additional crossing guard to a busy intersection they use on the way to school.

To Foster Concept Development:

The world -- even the child's world -- is full of abstractions which children find difficult to deal with unless those abstractions are put into a more concrete form. In concept development, we help children reduce the complexities of the world into manageable proportions, sometimes even into tangibles. For example, the concept occupation can easily be broken down into jobs people have in our community, in our state and in different parts of the world. We deal with the concept occupation because it is a social studies concept and because it is a word students add to their developing vocabularies.

Concepts are organizing structures which are with students the rest of their lives. They can, for example, role play in class different occupations in categories: outdoor jobs, helping professions, jobs dealing with money (bank teller, store clerk, payroll clerk, etc.). The concept, democracy, can easily be turned from an abstraction into a manageable form by having a democratically run classroom.

The value of teaching concepts is their future use; their applicability. When children encounter a new situation, they can use their knowledge of concepts to understand the new situation. For example, the concept of role helps them to understand why men and women, in countries other than the United States, do what they do: for example why women, because of culture, are the farmers in East Africa.

To Provide Citizenship Practice:

Citizenship is another skill we teach in the social studies classroom and one which is taught best by doing. We don't just study a democratic system or study about democracy, but we need to do democracy in the classroom. We need to have monthly, or twice a semester, elections for class officers, and we need to have open meetings on classroom rules or activities. Remember, we all learn best by doing, and in social studies class that includes participation, role play, and interacting with objects, materials and people.

In conclusion, social studies is a very important subject for elementary school. Our field is a huge one, yet, for years we expected only the secondary school teachers to really teach it. But, that is an impossible task for them. First, there is just too much material: the history of the entire world from day one plus all the information from all the social sciences: economics, geography, sociology, anthropology, and political science, and throw in current events, too.

Clearly, we cannot wait until the children reach age 12 before helping them learn about their world and their place in it. If we do not expose them to other worlds sooner, fears and prejudice will abound. Students need to learn how to learn much earlier than junior high school. We must provide them with the skills of inquiry and other social studies skills long before they reach adolescence.

Social studies is more than pursuit of trivia -- names, places, dates. It is not a trivial pursuit, one of the frills of school. Indeed, it may well be the most important class in all of elementary school for we deal with people; we deal with skills; we deal with concepts and values; we deal with life: not a trivial matter at all. And if we're doing less than that, we have only ourselves to blame for the future these young people, as adults, will create...or destroy.

DEVELOPING CLASSROOM MATERIALS TO SUPPORT THE REVISED NEW YORK STATE SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Eileen Neeson
Social Studies Unit
New York City Board of Education

In 1984, the Social Studies Unit of the New York City Board of Education's Division of Curriculum and Instruction embarked upon the challenge of developing classroom materials to support the revised New York State Grade 5 curriculum. The process which the Social Studies Unit used — one of several possible models for developing a curriculum — may be emulated by any school or school system. The purpose of this article is to describe that process.

Studying the New York State Program:

Studying, in-depth, the New York State Bureau of Social Studies' recommended syllabus for Grade 5 was the first step in the City's curriculum efforts. The syllabus provides a framework for the fifth grade course of study. In its "Overview," the syllabus states, "the grade five program stresses geographic, economic, and social/cultural understandings related to the United States, Canada, and Latin America."[1] Historic and political understandings, while included, receive minor emphasis. The integration of content understandings with concepts and skills is encouraged in each classroom lesson.

Teachers choose content examples, or case studies, to help students grasp understandings and build toward concept learning. Ten specific concepts are stressed: change, citizenship, culture, empathy, environment, identity, interdependence, nation-state, scarcity and technology. The social studies skills to be incorporated in lessons are categorized under the headings: getting information, using information, presenting information, participating in interpersonal and group relations, and self-management.

Considering Organization:

Before any materials could be developed, New York City curriculum writers had to consider the crucial question of organization. We decided to undertake a regional study of the Western Hemisphere. Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Canada and the United States would comprise separate themes in the curriculum. Each country or region would then be presented from four social science perspectives represented by the following subthemes: geography or environment, history, economics and culture.

Selecting Content Based on Concepts and Understandings:

Within each perspective, understandings from the State syllabus would guide the choice of specific content. The following chart illustrates how these syllabus concepts and related understandings suggested content examples in the geography subtheme of the Caribbean theme:

THEME: THE CARIBBEAN
SUBTHEME: ENVIRONMENT (GEOGRAPHY)

CONCEPTS	UNDERSTANDINGS	POSSIBLE CONTENT
Environment	Climatic patterns are influenced by the interaction of various geographic features.	- Natural features of West Indian environments.
		- The Northeast Trade Winds, island elevations and rainfall.
	The physical environment is affected by people as they interact with it.	- People-made features of the Caribbean environment.
Empathy		- Effects of hurricanes in the West Indies.
Culture	People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to fulfill basic needs.	- Agriculture and industry (for example, tourism) in the islands.
Technology	The effect of geography has been moderated by humans through the use of technology.	- Use of weather satellites to track hurricanes.

Locating and Developing Learning Materials:

Locating and developing appropriate learning materials or data became the next task for the curriculum writers. The search for data included consulting student textbooks, children's and adult literature, newspapers, periodicals, and historical sources as well as materials distributed by consulates and travel agencies. These sources were used to form a set of student worksheets, suitable for reproduction, with the appropriate strategies for teachers. In addition to using materials produced by the Board of Education, classroom teachers are encouraged to create their own classroom materials. Their selections, like those chosen by our curriculum writers, ought to meet the following criteria:

- Help students build toward the concepts and understandings specified in the State's Grade 5 syllabus.
- Accurately portray the region or culture being studied. Data should avoid stereotyping developing nations as "backward," "underdeveloped," or "primitive." Care should be taken to show similarities where they exist to our own culture rather than emphasizing exotic differences.
- Be sensitive to the cultural diversity found in regions and countries of the Western Hemisphere -- cultures with which many of our students identify ethnically.
- Provide a variety of media and format.
- Have human interest appeal.
- Be primary, if possible. If source is a secondary account, such as expository material taken from a textbook, it should be recast into a more interesting format.
- Encourage learners' involvement and activity.
- Be interdisciplinary; that is, data should include literature, music, art, science, etc.
- Encourage critical thinking.

The following four abbreviated examples of student worksheets illustrate how we attempted to meet these criteria in our Caribbean theme:

STUDENT WORKSHEET -- THEME: THE CARIBBEAN
SUBTHEME: ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

MEMORIES OF TROPICAL BEAUTY

TO THE STUDENT: Despite the hardships of island life, West Indian writers know the beauty of their homeland. Claude McKay is one of the most famous poets from the British West Indies. In this poem he tells of seeing a store window in New York displaying products from his home:

"The Tropics in New York"[2]

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger-root,
Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
And tangerines and mangoes and grapefruit,
Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,

Set in the window, bringing memories...
Of fruit trees...
And dewy dawns....

My eyes grew dim, and I could no more gaze;
A wave of longing through my body swept,
And, hungry for the old, familiar ways,
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

STUDENT WORKSHEET -- THEME: THE CARIBBEAN
SUBTHEME: PAST AND PRESENT

PUERTO RICO: COMMONWEALTH, STATE OR INDEPENDENT NATION[3]

TO THE STUDENT: If Caribbean World Television produced a debate on the question "What should be the relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States?" the following statements might be made.

MODERATOR: Welcome to a debate on the question: What should be the relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States?... In 1952, Puerto Rico was made a commonwealth of the United States. This is a special friendship. It means that Puerto Ricans govern themselves but that the island's government is joined to the United States.

SENOR COMMONWEALTH: Yes, Puerto Rico should remain a Commonwealth. As a commonwealth, Puerto Rico elects its own governor...

SENORITA STATEHOOD: ...If Puerto Rico becomes a state of the United States, islanders would be able to vote for president of the United States -- a right they do not have now....

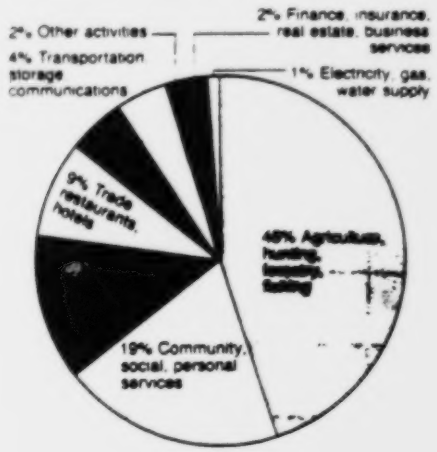
SENORA INDEPENDENCE: Living conditions on the island will not improve until Puerto Rico becomes an independent nation. Puerto Rico needs a government of its very own....

C. STUDENT WORKSHEET -- THE CARIBBEAN
SUBTHEME: DEPENDENT ECONOMIES

WHAT CARIBBEAN PEOPLE DO FOR A LIVING

TO THE STUDENT: Examine the graph below which shows the kinds of work people do on the Caribbean Islands.

What the People Do for a Living[4]


2% Other activities
4% Transportation storage communications
2% Finance, insurance, real estate, business services
1% Electricity, gas, water supply
9% Trade restaurants, hotels
45% Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing
19% Community, social, personal services

D. STUDENT WORKSHEET -- THE CARIBBEAN
SUBTHEME: THE CULTURAL INHERITANCE

WEST INDIANS IN THE U.S.A.

TO THE STUDENT: As editor of the American Gazette, how would you answer the following letters? Use the spaces provided.

AMERICAN GAZETTE

Letters to the Editor[5]

Dear Editor,

When I was growing up in the islands, we always had some relatives living with us. There was always at least one aunt, uncle, or cousin. But I notice that things are different in the States. Here I find that usually parents and their children live in a house. Some of these people do not even know some of their cousins. My brother wants to send my niece to come and live with me so that she can go to school in New York. Some of my friends tell me that I would be looking for trouble if I accept my niece into my home. They tell me that New York is not like the islands. I would like to be a good aunt, but I do not know if I would be doing the right thing if I sent for my niece.

Anna

Selecting Strategies:

Once worksheets are developed, the curriculum writer selects strategies, or suggested approaches, for teaching specific topics. The following examples show how the content and the data selected will often suggest the most appropriate strategies.

	CONTENT	DATA SELECTED	STRATEGIES OR TECHNIQUES
A.	Physical environment of the West Indies.	Claude McKay poem, "The Tropics in New York."	o Choral reading of the poem. o Bringing tropical products to class. o Pretending to be visiting a foreign country and writing a poem describing products in a store window that recall New York.
B.	The political status of Puerto Rico.	Open ended role play in which advocates for commonwealth, statehood and independence engage in a TV debate.	o Role-playing -- taking roles of characters in the playlet. o Working in committees --preparing their own classroom debate. o Staging a class debate. o Polling friends and relatives on the question of Puerto Rico's political status.
C.	Occupations of Caribbean peoples.	Pie graph entitled "What the People Do for a Living."	o Interpreting graphs with assistance of teacher -- Class sits as a whole. o Creating a bar graph using figures on the pie graph. o Doing individual research on sectors of the Caribbean economy identified on the graph. Writing for information to consulates, visiting travel agencies.
D.	Culture shock experienced by West Indian immigrants to the United States.	"Letters to the Editor" written by newly arrived West Indian immigrants to the U.S.A.	o Problem-solving. Students work in small groups to answer one of the letters. o Interviewing West Indian immigrants or immigrants from any other part of the world about the degree to which they experienced culture shock upon their arrival here.

Identifying Skills to be Developed:

Just as the identification of teaching strategies is a direct outgrowth of the data, so too is the identification of the social studies skills to be developed. The playlet on Puerto Rico's political status, for example, lends itself to the development of these particular skills:

Playlet on Puerto Rico's Status	Identifying differences and similarities
	Differentiating fact from opinion
	Identifying frames of reference
	Speaking in an effective way by preparing a debate

The "Letters to the Editor" written by West Indian immigrants suggest the development of different skills:

West Indians' Letters to the Editor	Locating the main idea
	Distinguishing causes and effects
	Writing in an expository way

This discussion outlines steps in New York City's curriculum process. However, it is hoped that the aspects of the process which have been described will provide assistance to school systems and teachers who wish to develop their own classroom materials.

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[1]Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, Grade 5 Social Studies Program (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), p. 29.

[2]Claude McKay, "The Tropics in New York," found in Wilfred Cartey, The West Indies: Islands in the Sun (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967), pp. 148-149.

[3]Adapted from the Advocates, Should Puerto Rico Become a State, a Commonwealth or an Independent Nation? (Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation, 1979), pp. 1-30.

[4]Jo Anne Buggey, Latin America and Canada, (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1983), p. 118.

[5]Adapted by Calvin Alexis in The Caribbean-American Experience, (Board of Education of the City of New York, 1978), p. 125.

DEVELOPING PARTICIPATION PROJECTS

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The Participation Project may be the least understood component of the New York State Social Studies Program. It is, perhaps, the most challenging and educationally ambitious component of the program. It is projected that a Participation Project will be included in the K-6 Social Studies Program Evaluation Test scheduled for implementation during the 1986-87 school year. While not intending to replace the suggestions found in the State Education Department K-6 Social Studies Program Guides, this article will go further in presenting a tested model for developing classroom Participation Projects.

When the Board of Regents determined that there would be an Action Plan to Improve Education in the State of New York, there were certain specific ideas in mind, including approaches to the elementary program and curriculum strategies. Real life applications were to be stressed. Learning was to be active and participatory; a building block of citizenship. Projects were to be interdisciplinary and were to integrate process with content, as well as cognitive with affective learning. Programs were to be responsive to individual student needs and learning styles. Youngsters would develop logical and creative thinking. Information would be gathered, used and presented.

The classroom Participation Project reflects the spirit of the Regents Action Plan. It contains the identified components of effective instruction. At the same time, it is directly related to social studies curriculum activities and instructional approaches. While content, concepts and skills are integrated in the entire social studies program, the Participation Project is particularly powerful in its focus on skills. Students must gather, use and present information. They participate in interpersonal and group relationships. With teacher monitoring and guidance, self-management skills are enhanced. The following concepts, with teacher support, are fostered through the group process itself: citizenship, empathy, identity (as an individual and as a group member) and interdependence.

Once you have prepared your Participation Project, you will have generated an exceptional learning opportunity for the students in your charge. The Participation Project may be regarded as an unique evaluational instrument. As a curricular approach, however, its value in enhancing the program and providing a focal point for bringing so much together for the students, must be underscored. A Participation Project is, in essence, a problem-solving activity created to involve students working in small groups to address the challenge. The challenge may range from creating an advertising campaign for a city, to developing an annotated list of community services. A well chosen and developed Participation Project reinforces the goals of the New York State Social Studies Program.

Classroom Participation Projects should be planned with students and can be carried out at all grade levels. Projects should utilize locally available resources, be responsive to the needs, interests and abilities of students and should directly relate to the concepts, content and skills of the curriculum. To develop a Participation Project, you will find it useful to refer to "Developing Participation Projects" in any of the K-6 Social Studies Program Guides, pages 20-25. In addition, the steps below can serve as guidelines. These steps were originally used to assist writers preparing Participation Project activities for the upcoming New York State Social Studies Program Evaluation. They are also suitable for developing projects for classroom use.

PHASE I - Create an Idea File

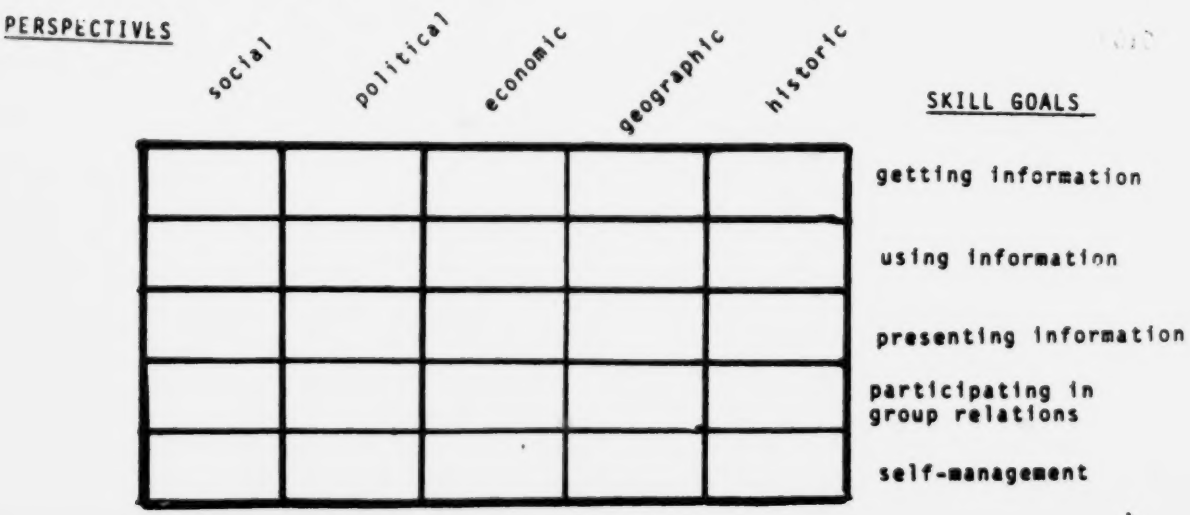
- o Clip and save materials which might be core ideas for Participation Projects
- o Brainstorm and list topics/ideas to be developed more fully later
- o Factors to keep in mind:
  - student interest level
  - manageability of materials
  - resource availability
  - links to curriculum
  - time factors

PHASE II - Topic Selection

- o Select a topic from your file
- o Prepare a brief descriptive summary of the Project (See sample abstracts on pages 24-25 of each grade level of the Program Guides.)
- o Include a broad statement of what students will do and how

PHASE III - Set Goals (It is <u>not</u> expected that any single participation project will address <u>all</u> of the program goals)

- o Identify specific goals from the New York State Social Studies Program. Include goals related to:
  - Content - See grade level perspectives (social, political, geographic, economic, historic) and particular understandings in the syllabus
  - Concepts - Change, citizenship, culture, empathy, environment, identify, interdependence, nation-state, scarcity, technology
  - Skills - Getting information, using information, presenting information, participation in interpersonal and group relations, and self-management skills
- o Use a matrix reference sheet, such as the one below, to identify content perspectives and skills being developed.



- Develop necessary handout material, activity sheets, and evaluation instruments when appropriate.

PHASE IV - A SUGGESTED Format for Designing and Implementing A Participation Project

- Step 1 - Springboard/stimulus - Provide the class with the same experience, problem, and/or materials (e.g., a reading, a speaker, fieldtrip, film, visual, artifacts).

- Step 2 - Individual/Class Activity - A follow-up on Step 1. Provide students with an opportunity to receive and respond to this information individually. As a class, students should use ideas generated by individuals.

- Step 3 - Small Groups - Form small groups, react to selected aspects of Steps 1 and 2 (above) as a transition into Step 4 (below).

- Step 4 - Group Activity - Involve students in a cooperative work activity. A group product is expected. The teacher provides monitoring, support and guidance for group processes and task completion. Consider allowing students to choose their own task assignments.

- Step 5 - Present/Sharing/Communicating - Students are expected to report on their work in Step 4 (e.g., project, display, oral report, debate, written expository report, play activity, performance).

PHASE V - EVALUATION

- Utilize any student activity sheets which are part of Phase IV.

- Utilize devices for individual/group evaluation.

  - Have the identified curricular goals (Phase III) been achieved by the individuals and groups engaged in the participation project?

While this format supplies a structure and sequence designed to assist you, it is recognized that many variations are possible. Using an approach that works well for you in your situation is always best. The essential commitment is to recognize the need for, to develop, and carry out participatory activities as part of a well-defined and well-developed social studies curriculum.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE:
EDUCATING FOR CITIZENSHIP:
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Citizenship education is traditionally a goal of social studies education in the United States. To implement this goal, social studies curriculum places emphasis on those knowledges, skills and attitudes necessary for developing positive participation in a democracy. Students are expected to understand the workings of local, state and national governments, to develop skills in forming judgments and making decisions and to develop attitudes that would ensure participation in the democratic process. Today, however, the concept of citizenship must extend beyond our national boundaries in order to include an understanding of global issues and a commitment to working toward solutions to global problems.

Nations, cultures and people, in general, do not live in isolation. For centuries, various groups of people have interacted in a multitude of ways. The results of the interactions, however, often took effect over extended periods of time because of poor or very slow methods of communication. Through advanced technology, however, interactions between and among nations is often instantaneous. Problems that arise in one part of the world are transmitted immediately over thousands of miles, and repercussions are sometimes immediate. News about world problems, such as overpopulation, starvation, displaced people, disease, conflict, nuclear weapons proliferation, and overuse of natural resources, reach us almost daily through the mass media. The reality is that solutions to these problems are no longer within the capabilities of any one nation; they are global problems. Solutions to these problems demand cooperative efforts presently and in the future by many nations.

If our students are to become aware of the significance of global issues, both to themselves and to people around the world, we must include opportunities for developing a global perspective and global citizenship beginning in the elementary school grades.

The social studies curriculum for the elementary grades usually includes content related to students' immediate or local environments. Teachers are expected to provide information about current world events and to prepare appropriate learning experiences. This expectation can lead to a haphazard approach to teaching and learning about global issues from grade to grade. In fact, references to world events and their global impacts become incidental, and are often omitted.

Concepts basic to global awareness must be addressed in elementary social studies programs in order to prepare students for future global challenges. A few significant concepts that should be introduced and developed in the elementary grades are:

- environment
- interdependence
- technology
- world citizenship

To initiate an awareness of global issues, provocative statements, or newspaper headlines may be written on the blackboard and used as a basis for class discussion and small group research projects.

We Are the World. We Are the Children of the World"
Gas Leak in Bhopal, India Concerns Community in Virginia, U.S.A."
"Computer Makers Eye Soviet School Market"
Acid Rain Damages Germany's Black Forest and Our Rocky Mountain Area"

Students may choose a statement and use the questions below to begin their research. Teachers should encourage their students to think of additional questions related to the statements chosen for research.

- o What is the story behind the statement?
- o Of what importance is the statement?
- o How might I be affected by the story behind the statement?
- o How might people in _____ be affected by the story behind the statement?

Many opportunities exist for helping students begin to understand how people depend upon products made of raw materials found in distant places. Divide a class into "investigative" groups. Each group is to choose a product such as toothpaste, chocolate, or aluminum pots and pans used in their daily lives, and trace its production back to the raw materials.

A visual report of each group's findings could be recorded on a world map or globe. Students may draw or cut out pictures from magazines of the raw materials needed to make the product they have investigated. The drawings or pictures are attached to the globe or map to indicate its source. A string could be used to connect the drawings or pictures to a sample of the real product. The story of how the product's development from raw material stage could be creatively told through stories, drawings, dramatizations and other types of reporting activities.

Major world events such as famine, space flights, and national conflicts are usually headlined in newspapers. These headlines can be used to stimulate interest. The teacher may select a few foreign language and American newspapers which headline one major world news item, such as space flight. The headlines may be placed on a bulletin board with translations. In a discussion of the headlines, the teacher should elicit from the class the significance of the news items to people in the United States as well as to people in other nations. Some questions that may be asked are:

- o Why is the event considered newsworthy? Of what importance is the space flight?
- o Why are foreign language newspapers printed and sold in the United States?
- o Why is the event reported in foreign language as well as English newspapers?
- o How might nations use information gained from space flights?
- o How might space flights help people around the world in the future?
- o How might nations work together in sharing their knowledge of our universe?

The effect of pollution on the environment is a global concern for which students can begin to plan and participate in solving local environmental problems.

Lessons on pollution and the environment can include those pollutants that we can see, hear, smell and feel.

- o How would you define pollution?
- o What pollutants can we see?
- o What type of pollutants can we smell?
- o How can sounds pollute our environment?
- o What are some pollutants that we can feel?

- How does pollution affect all of us?
- How might we reduce the amount of pollution in our environment?
- How can pollution such as an oil spill affect people in more than one nation?
- How can nations work together to reduce the amount of pollution in regions of the world?
- How does pollution affect all of us?
- How might you work to reduce pollution in your community?

After students have discussed the various ways that pollution affects the environment, various activities may be pursued. Some students may want to develop a chart on pollutants from transportation vehicles. Another chart could illustrate how people pollute the environment.

Transportation Pollutants

Vehicle	See	Smell	Hear	Feel
Airplane	Jet Stream		Noise	Vibration
Automobile	Smoke	Fumes	Noise	
Bus	Smoke	Fumes	Noise	
Ship	Oil Spill			
Train			Noise	Vibration
Truck	Smoke	Fumes	Noise	Heat

Other students may help to initiate a community campaign to reduce pollution by participating in a variety of activities that could draw attention to their concerns. They could design leaflets and posters that illustrate various pollution problems and distribute them throughout the community. They could write letters to community leaders about their concerns, but also include suggestions about what they think can be done.

There are many different approaches to begin to introduce elementary school students to the realities of today's world. Teachers and students can work together on developing many interesting activities that will foster an understanding of global issues. In this joint effort, knowledge necessary for citizenship in a global society can become a reality.

TEACHING FOR CONCEPT LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

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I am often amused by the way we in social studies "do" our topics... We "do Columbus", "do Canada", "do immigration" and the like. It is not difficult to ascertain just what it is that we "do" in each grade in our programs. It is, however, far more difficult to justify why we "do" what we do, why we select specific content and what purposes it serves. There are, of course, many possible answers to that question, including such things as societal expectations, learner needs, availability of materials, and tradition. However, I suggest that one key factor that should offer a rationale for our selection of content is often overlooked. That factor is the potential of selected content for developing concepts that are important to a student's understanding of social studies.

Concepts are powerful tools. Though frequently conveyed by just a single word or word combination, they convey rich mental images or word pictures. Concepts are usually abstract, and are the product of an individual's experience base as well as factual knowledge. Therefore, the specific notion evoked by a concept label may vary from person to person. However, there is generally sufficient shared understanding to allow people within a cultural group to communicate using concepts as verbal shorthand. Consider, for example, the complex idea conveyed by referring to a "fair game" or a "powerful leader".

In addition to varying from person to person, concepts may vary relative to time and space. Consider the concept of technology prior to the space age, and its context today, or citizenship in an increasingly global world. However, concepts retain baseline attributes that enable them to be mental organizers from era to era.

Their dynamic nature is a compelling reason why concepts should be considered as important goals of social studies instruction from the early year. Developmentalists tell us that concepts develop slowly in a person's mind in a gradual cumulative process. Concrete experiences contribute sensory as well as cognitive input for concept development. Varied experiences at all levels of instruction provide for the expansion of concepts. Both planned and incidental experiences in the school contribute to the student's concept development.

Another reason for attention to concepts as learning goals is that teaching for concept learning encourages the development of thinking skills. Concept development strategies involve such processes as comparing, contrasting, analyzing and synthesizing. In essence, concept learning emphasizes the utilization of facts, not merely the acquisition of facts.

Another significant advantage of the idea centered or concept centered curriculum is that a concept can be developed using a wide variety of specific descriptive facts. This flexibility allows teachers to adjust the curriculum to different student interests, and developmental, cultural or motivational factors, while still addressing the overarching curricular goals.

There is a wide variety of strategies designed to guide students in using information to develop concepts. In each case, however, concept development strategies provide an

opportunity for students to take in information, organize it and generalize from it on the basis of these processes. It is important to note that these processes focus on teaching and reinforcing content while at the same time teaching students methods through which they can become more effective thinkers.

The following examples show the use of three concept development strategies put to work to teach lessons based on the New York State Social Studies Program K-6. This program, distributed to New York State schools in 1982, stresses content, concept and skill goals. Ten key concepts rooted in the social sciences provide a focus at each grade level. These concepts are change, citizenship, culture, empathy, environment, identity, interdependence, nation-state, scarcity, and technology.

In the first example, a first grade teacher is working to help students understand an institution common to all cultures; that of family. The teacher is using study prints of individuals and family groupings in Nigeria, India, the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. The lesson is building toward the concept of cultural diversity using the familiar example of family as an age appropriate point of departure. Note the progression of the questions in this concept development strategy:

- o What are some of the things you see in each of these pictures?
  - Students respond, and teacher lists on chart paper. Their responses include such things as: each picture has people; the people are of different ages; there are men and women in some of the pictures... and children in some; in some pictures the people are alone, etc.
- o Do any of these pictures seem to belong together?
  - Students consider ways of grouping the pictures, finding similarities, rearranging the study prints on the chalkboard, and talking about their reasons. Several ideas for grouping are proposed by the children, and the teacher encourages them to discuss and develop their ideas. Children are practicing skills of using and presenting information as well as expanding their vocabulary. The experience chart will serve as a point of reference for future lessons, both in reading and social studies.
- o What could you call the group you have made here?
  - The teacher records labels suggested by the students. Such words as friend, family, people alone, are suggested. The teacher takes time with the children to discuss their labels, and the reasons for the labels.

Additional questions include the following:

- o Could some of these pictures belong in more than one group?
- o Could you give a sentence about this group; that one?

In this strategy, the teacher asks the children to observe, group, explain groupings, and label groups. The process is an inductive one. The teacher will follow up the lesson by reading a series of books about families around the world to students. Of course, no single lesson alone will allow a child to attain a concept. However, the composite of experiences, planned and spontaneous, contribute to concept understanding.

The next strategy combines induction and discovery, as illustrated by a lesson designed to help fifth graders explore the concept of technology. The teacher begins by naming or labeling the concept, "technology". The teacher then uses a series of selected slides as follows:

- o Today we are going to think about the idea of technology.
- o This is an example of technology. It is a hydroelectric power plant in Ontario.
  - Students discuss what they see.
  - The teacher shows additional slides selected from regions of the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and South America: the areas of study targeted in the grade five New York State Program. The teacher identifies each as an example or a nonexample of the concept of technology. After several examples and nonexamples, the teacher asks the students to decide if additional slides are examples or nonexamples of technology. Finally the teacher asks:
    - What do you think technology means, based on what we have seen today?

In subsequent lessons, the teacher builds on the concept, leading students to explore technology at work in their own school and community. In addition, they study cases in the Western hemisphere where technology has had positive and negative effects on people, their culture, and the environment.

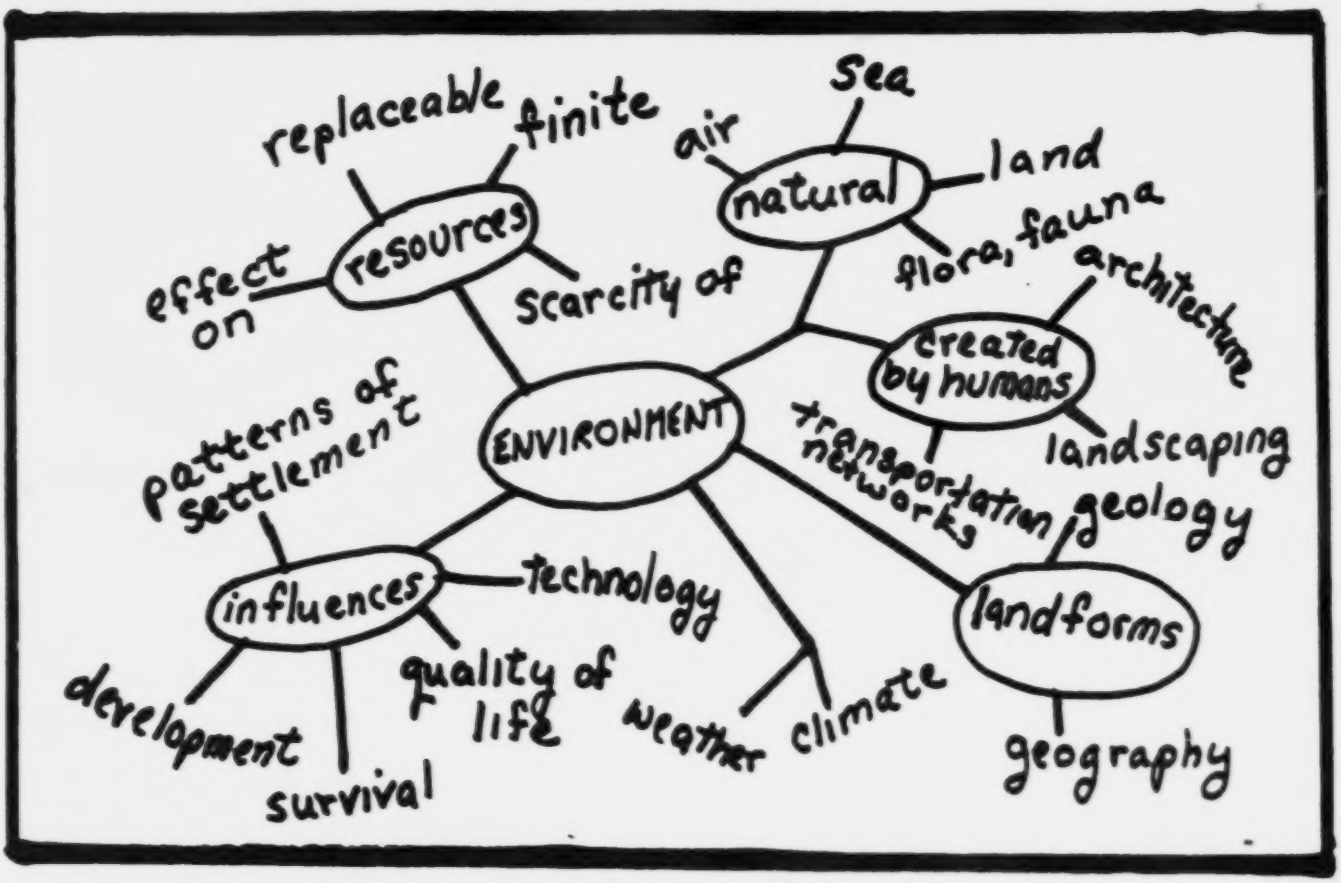
A deductive expository approach is a third strategy used in teaching for concept learning. In this example, a fourth grade teacher is on a walking tour with the students. They have been studying architectural details associated with certain periods in the history of the local community and the United States. The teacher has developed the lesson series to build toward the concept of change. Victorian architecture is the topic for the day's walk. The teacher begins by defining Victorian architecture and then proceeds to illustrate the key identifying attributes of buildings of the period.

- o I'm going to show you the characteristics on several buildings that are distinctly Victorian.
  - As the students walk with the teacher, the teacher identifies features. The students sketch the details. One student takes photographs. These items will be used in a booklet the students are preparing.
- o These details are not examples of Victorian architecture.
  - The teacher alternates examples and nonexamples, explaining why each is, or is not, an example.
- o Now, do you think this is an example of Victorian architecture or not?
  - As students make their guesses, the teacher immediately reinforces correct answers and corrects misconceptions.

In follow-up activities, students write about the specific buildings they have visited, describing the architectural details that are distinctly Victorian. These efforts are part of a larger Participation Project that will result in a booklet published and distributed to each school and library in the district.

There are many variations on these three basic concept development strategies. However, they all have in common the processes of identifying attributes, classifying, categorizing and labeling. Because concept development and attainment strategies emphasize these higher level thinking skills, they offer valuable insights into how children are processing the information in social studies lessons. These insights can help in planning appropriate learning experiences; the formative aspects of evaluation. In addition, they can help in measuring student growth; the summative function of evaluation. Concept webbing, sometimes referred to as networking, is a useful tool for both in these evaluative purposes.

Such a web has as its center the idea or concept students are considering. Components related to that concept are mapped to show graphic "think links". A concept web created by sixth grade students might look like the example below.



What can we tell about the students that created this web? For one thing, the "mental map" indicates that the students who contributed to this web have a sense of cause and effect as it relates to environmental issues. They have used some social studies vocabulary in an appropriate way. More probing may be in order to check this out. The students have done some high level classifying and categorizing. Here, too, follow-up questions could assess the level of sophistication of group members.

Of course, this process of showing information in a concept web is one that the teacher must teach to students; much as the skills of graphing and chart making are taught. It is interesting that many students have a much easier time with webbing than they might with outlining or filling in information retrieval charts, perhaps attesting to the fact that learning styles influence the way each of us possesses information. Teachers report that students become more facile with webbing through practice, and that their products, done individually or in groups, offer a valuable window into their thinking.

Additional evaluation strategies for assessing concept learning include asking students to identify, and/or create, new examples of a concept they have studied. They might be asked to distinguish examples from nonexamples. Another approach is to ask them to change examples into nonexamples, or go in the opposite direction, and explain their reasoning.

We have a great deal to learn about concept learning. Though the notion has appeared in the literature of our field for many years, we do not know enough about how students systematically come to understand their world, what impact learning styles and developmental levels have on the process, whether concepts should be sequenced, and, if so, by what criteria. However, there is significant evidence in research and day-to-day experience to convince us of the need to help students perceive, understand and order their world. Concepts can serve that function.

As we select content specifics from the vast array of possible topics, as we choose to "do" Canada or "do" river valley civilizations, we should always keep in mind the concept development potential of our choices. We should keep a realistic view of what is likely to be remembered, and what is likely to be forgotten.

In today's world, knowledge becomes outdated very rapidly. A great deal of the specific factual content a child learns in the elementary classroom will be out-of-date before the student pulls the lever in the voting booth for the first time. Teaching for concept learning can help ensure that the student is equipped with dynamic organizers that will serve to foster lifelong learning.

TEACHING FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

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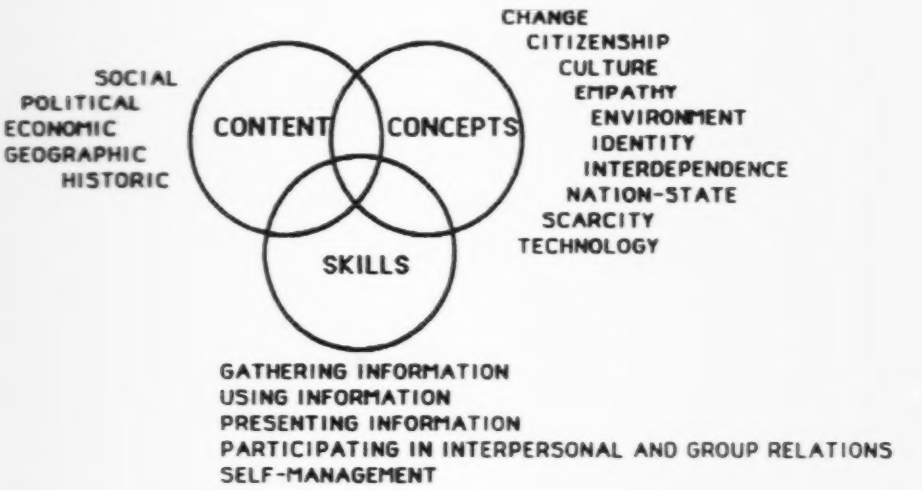
Social studies instruction at the elementary level serves several key functions. One of these is teaching for skill development. Social studies goals must include skills that will allow students to gather, use and present information, to think critically and solve problems and to participate as members of a group, if meaningful learning is to occur.

The teaching of skills is essential to content instruction. This diagram of the goals of the New York State K-6 Social Studies Program illustrates the relationship of skill development to factual information:



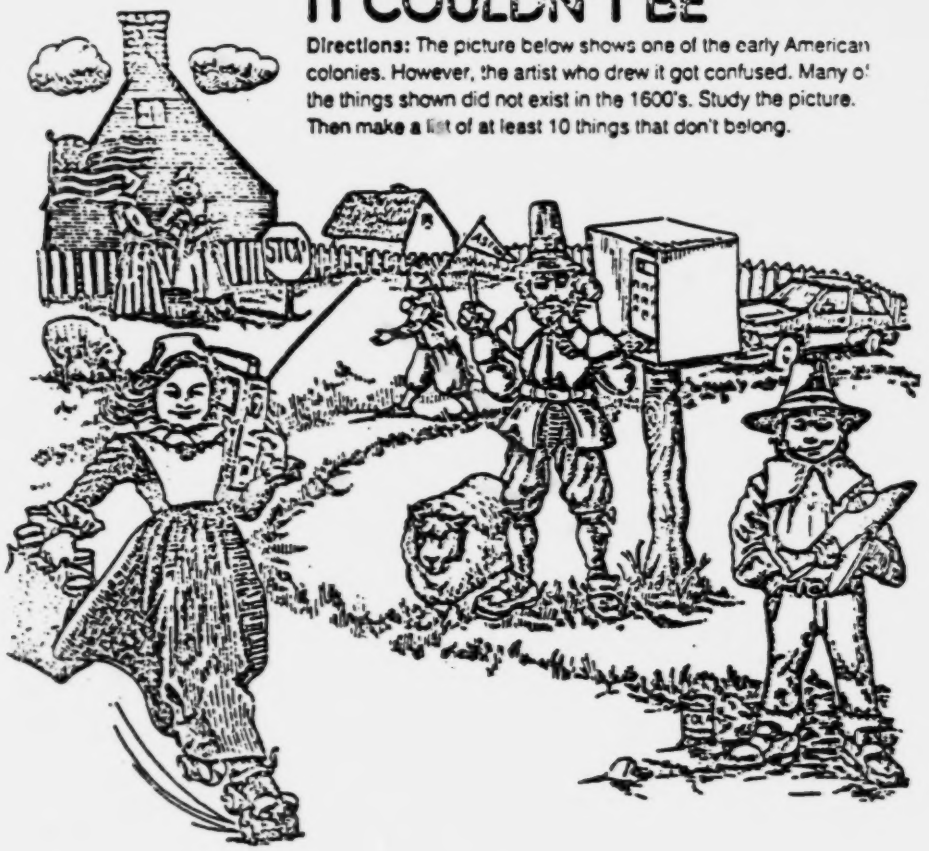
The skills component of the diagram is integrative because it incorporates the content and the concept goals. Content should be taught in order to develop a concept and implement a skill. Skill instruction is not separated out from the goals of the lesson and taught in isolation on a practice ditto. In fact, each and every social studies lesson should be planned with content, concept and skill goals in mind.

The essential function of skill teaching can be illustrated by a lesson on communication and transportation in colonial life. Students are asked to read a passage about daily life in colonial times. After the reading, the teacher distributes the picture included below. Students are asked (separately or with a partner) to list 10 items that do not belong. After completing the task, the following questions should be asked:

- Why didn't the items belong?
- How was the task or action done in colonial times?
- How is the task done today? How is the item used today?

IT COULDN'T BE

Directions: The picture below shows one of the early American colonies. However, the artist who drew it got confused. Many of the things shown did not exist in the 1600's. Study the picture. Then make a list of at least 10 things that don't belong.



1. _____ 6. _____
2. _____ 7. _____
3. _____ 8. _____
4. _____ 9. _____
5. _____ 10. _____

15 Unit Two

Information gathered from the questions should be recorded in a chart. The chart form could be titled as follows:

Item	Function in Colonial Times	Function Today

Students should use the data in the chart to compose a paragraph comparing colonial transportation and communication. The chart and classroom discussion has become a pre-writing activity which will lead to a follow-up writing assignment.

Has the content been learned? The concept developed? The skill implemented? It certainly has. The students have studied transportation and communication in colonial times. They have developed the concept of change. They have also engaged in the skills of using and presenting information. The discussion of similarities and differences culminating in the writing of a paragraph are synthesis activities. Students use skills to reinforce their content learning. Process and information are interwoven and not separated.

It is important to ask students what they have learned so that they identify the connection between content, concept and skill learning. A model for the development of skills incorporates the identification and definition of the skill into the process of teaching it.

The model includes the following steps:

(A) The teacher must

1. Read about, tell about or show the skill;
2. Explain the steps involved in using the skill;
3. Demonstrate the skill.

(B) The students, with decreasing teacher instruction and guidance must:

4. Practice the skill numerous times on a variety of data or examples;
5. Reflect on, and summarize, the skill and its components

In the beginning of the above lesson on transportation and communication in colonial times, students can be told they are going to learn how to make comparisons.

The steps to doing this consist of:

- identify items in a category
- look for what they do or how they function
- look for similarities or how they have the same functions today
- look for how they are different today
- make a statement about the differences and similarities

After the steps are identified, the exercise is used as a class lesson. As a summary of the lesson, students are asked to state the steps of comparison. They essentially answer the questions:

I learned the skill of _____

The steps to the skill are _____

_____

_____

I know this because today I did the following _____

_____

A similar skill of comparison can be done with a sound recording and a set of pictures. The children would be studying what family life was like in their community in the 19th century. A recording could be made of the sounds included in the accompanying pictures. Questions such as the following could be asked:

- What sounds are you hearing?
- Which activities do they represent
- What do the sounds help you to know about family life?
- What might be some sounds of family life today?
- What are the similarities between sounds in the 19th century and today?
- What are some differences in the sounds?
- How would you compare family life then and now based on the sounds?

Have the students learned the content? The concept of change? The skill of comparison?

Skill teaching is a first grade activity as well as a fourth, fifth and sixth grade one. The integrative aspects of the model can be illustrated in the following first grade lesson. The teacher uses as a stimulus, study prints of a variety of families from around the world. Students are asked to:

- Look at the pictures. Each one is a family. Describe each picture.
- Draw a picture of your own family.
- How are each of the families the same?
- How are they different?
- What is a family?

Students, in this first grade, have gathered information and made a statement about the information. They can state what they have learned for the day and what they did.

Skill teaching must not be isolated from the learning of content. It must be based upon the content or it becomes an empty exercise. At the same time, content isolated from the process of learning is meaningless to students and hardly remembered. Teachers of social studies must plan systematically and purposefully to integrate skill teaching into elementary social studies.

TESTING WHAT WE TEACH

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One vital element of a total instructional program in social studies that often receives little attention is the testing and evaluation of student learning. Teachers with whom I have worked, frequently wanted advice or information on "how to" — how to implement the curriculum; how to deal with specific social science content; how to find needed materials; and how to make social studies lessons more interesting and relevant. While planning an elementary social studies inservice course, I asked participants to identify those aspects of social studies instruction with which they wanted to deal in the upcoming sessions. Not once was testing and evaluation mentioned in their responses. Few teachers, or districts for that matter, are concerned with evaluating what has been taught in social studies in a way that will improve the overall quality of the social studies program. I see this as a serious flaw in what might otherwise be fine social studies programs.

I suspect that there may be several reasons for this lack of attention to improving the quality of evaluation in social studies at the elementary level. This, in turn, is related to the problem of what is actually taught as social studies in elementary classrooms. First, because many elementary teachers don't perceive themselves as being knowlegeable enough in the social sciences, they're reluctant to develop their own evaluation instruments for assessing what has been taught and what has been learned in their classrooms. After all, how could they handle a situation in which one of their students might actually know more about a topic than they do or want more information than they can provide? Secondly, I believe many teachers are quite comfortable using published workbooks, worksheets, and tests that accompany their social studies textbooks. It is often falsely assumed that there is an expertise built into not only the content of these materials, but also the techniques they employ. Besides, these materials save time and energy: things very much at a premium to the already overburdened elementary teachers. Lastly, many teachers feel obligated to teach "for" a district, building, or grade-level testing program into which they may not have had any input. In order to "keep up", content coverage becomes the guiding force behind social studies instruction and evaluation in their classrooms. The innovative teachers may doubt whether their unique classroom activities are really serving their students' needs if they aren't helping prepare them for "the" test.

All of this leads to a most important conclusion: most of what passes for testing and evaluation in elementary social studies programs tends to focus on the mastery of cognitive information and basic skills and does little, if anything, to test higher levels of thinking and learning. While the acquisition of social science information is certainly one goal of the total instructional program, it must not be the only one. A quality testing program can, and should, serve as a means to several other important ends. In addition to providing the statistical data the teacher may need to put on various grade reporting forms, good evaluation techniques and practices can provide teachers and districts with a wealth of critical information about the value of the school's social studies curriculum in the real world setting. Evaluation data can offer insights into the effectiveness of the teaching methods and materials being used, and the extent of the learning which has taken place in the learner. But, evaluation can only serve these ends if the testing and evaluation techniques go beyond low level recall testing.

Through testing and evaluation we certainly do want to find out what the student knows; but knowing has many different facets. Good testing should explore all of them. As a result of the test's findings, the teacher should also be able to find out how well their lessons taught what they wanted to teach and what improvements they should make in the program. Thus, since the only purpose of testing should not be to find out what a student can or cannot recall, the overall quality of teacher-made tests and evaluation instruments needs to be improved.

Plan for Evaluation

In many cases, tests are viewed as terminal, in and of themselves. They are usually developed after the lesson, chapter, or unit has been taught and the teacher wants to know what the students have learned. I contend that good testing and evaluation are integral parts of the entire process of goal setting, objective writing, and lesson planning. Exactly what is to be evaluated and how it is going to be measured should be decided and planned before the lesson is actually taught. After the testing or evaluation is completed, the teacher(s) must analyze the results to determine if the goals and objectives have been met and what, if any, modifications will need to be made in future lessons.

Let's explore a concrete example. Suppose the teacher has established as a general goal that the students in a class need to understand the concept of representative democracy. There are several different levels at which the teacher may approach the goal and then determine the extent to which the goal has been achieved by the students.

At the simplest, and most fundamental level, a teacher would want the students to "know" what a representative democracy is, by definition. In a typical true/false question the teacher might ask:

A True or False Question:

> A representative democracy is a type of government in which eligible voters elect some citizens to make laws for everyone.

A Multiple Choice Question:

> The government of the United States is an example of:
>
> 1. totalitarian rule
> 2. a monarchy
> 3. representative democracy
> 4. an aristocracy

But is this enough? What else is there that a good citizen should "know" about representative democracy? In order to fully understand what a representative democracy is, students will also need to have developed some understanding of the related concepts of citizen and citizenship. Thus, in order to achieve the broader goal of understanding representative democracy, it seems reasonable that in planning lessons the teacher would have to deal with, in some fashion, the rights and duties of citizens in a representative democracy. To evaluate higher levels of learning, the teacher might plan to ask students the following types of questions:

- What is a law you think the city council should <u>not</u> pass because it would be unfair to some of the city's residents?

- Suppose the city council did pass a law like the one you identified above. What are three (3) actions a good citizen could take to have the law repealed?

- Which one of these actions do you think would be most effective and why?

Questions like these incorporate several levels of thinking and demonstrate in-depth learning of social science concepts. The student must recall the principles of representative democracy and then must be able to translate and apply this recalled information to a specific example. In the process the student must finally make an evaluaton of fairness and effectiveness based on these same principles.

Complete understanding of representative democracy assumes not only knowledge of what it is by definition and example, but also requires knowledge of how, and on what principles, it operates. Additionally, it incorporates certain affective skills and attitudes. To be more specific, citizenship in a representative democracy requires the ability and willingness to empathize. It also requires recognition of, and willingness to, incorporate a constructive attitude toward change, ambiguity and conflict which are all elements of a truly representative democracy. These affective goals cannot easily be evaluated in multiple choice or true/false items in a workbook or on a test.

How can the teacher evaluate these higher level thinking and valuing skills in a typical classroom testing situation? As one example, the teacher might present the students with an appropriate real world situation. Depending on the grade level of the class, the teacher may draw on a classroom or school problem; a local state, or federal issue; or a case involving a foreign nation currently being covered in the news media. The situation selected as a case study needs to raise issues or problems related to the principles of representative democracy.

In a class or small group discussion, the teacher may have the students analyze the situation. Initially, it is necessary to determine if students are able to identify, list, and/or cite specific principles involved in the situation being investigated. Students should then be evaluated on how well they apply what they know of a theoretical model of representative democracy to the real world situation under study. Using student generated criteria of the characteristics of representative democracy, they could then be asked to determine how well those characteristics are operating in the situation. Additionally, students might be asked to propose and support alternative solutions to the problems in the situation.

In this type of activity, the teacher doesn't necessarily get specific paper and pencil responses for "grading" purposes. The activity does afford the teacher with a number of objective and subjective opportunities to observe and evaluate the acquisition of specific knowledge at various levels of understanding. More importantly, the actual group interaction enables the teacher to determine if students have incorporated certain affective skills and attitudes that are necessary to be a functioning citizen in a representative democracy.

What if it becomes obvious after conducting such an activity that the students cannot do much of what is being prescribed? Who fails...? the students...? the teacher...? the program? Perhaps all of these. It should be reiterated here that the real purpose of testing and evaluation is not only to determine what students can recall, but also to determine the extent of student learning and to assist educators in assessing the effectiveness of curriculum, the methods and the materials being used. To whatever extent the students can, or cannot, perform at the levels involved in the type of activity described, the teacher's school's, or district's program will need to be re-examined and modified as needed.

The effective teacher and/or program is one that utilizes lessons which will allow students to synthesize the social science concepts, content understandings, and skills being

taught and then evaluate learning in such a way as to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge with real world applications. To do less is to fail in the role of educator.

If teachers and districts really want to test what they teach, they must begin by looking at what and how they test. They need to determine exactly what it is they ultimately want students to know and to be able to do. Then, they must decide if their testing and evaluation instruments do the job. The unique possibilities for testing and evaluation that exist in the field of social studies are tremendous. However, good testing and evaluation must be tied to the other aspects of quality teaching — setting of clear and attainable goals and objectives; systematic and meaningful lesson planning; selection of appropriate materials; and the application of appropriate methodology. Social studies evaluation cannot be divorced from other classoom and real world considerations. It cannot be an afterthought, but must be a significant and constructive part of a well-developed program in social studies instruction.

LIKE A "LITTLE" GARLIC OR PREGNANCY:

PREPARING AND RETAINING THE BEST ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

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A humorous piece that has made the rounds goes something like this: "You know you are a born elementary social studies teacher if

you murmur "no cutting" when a shopper squeezes ahead of you in a checkout line

you move your dinner partner's glass away from the edge of the table

you ask if anyone needs to go to the bathroom as you enter a theater with a group of friends

you refer to "snack time" instead of "happy hour"

you ask a quiet person at a party if he or she has something to "share with the group..."

There is a grain of truth to this parody, but only a grain. Likely, there are persons who seem inclined to be teachers who have the "right intentions." However, we would not place any more faith in them to teach our children than we would trust a "well intentioned" doctor to operate on them.

Nor would we count on a doctor simply because she or he had passed the written part of the "boards." The only thing we could be assured from that bit of knowledge is that the doctor was a good test taker. Surely, we would want more evidence that the doctor genuinely could apply the kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes that constitute good, competent medicine.

Maybe "good intentions" are necessary, but certainly they are not sufficient.

What preparation is sufficient for the kind of competence we want in an elementary social studies teacher — one who must play various diffused roles in an occupation and whose recognition may come only from leaving the classroom for administration? In this vein, we may be reminded of the cartoon showing a mechanic working on a woman's car, saying, "You teach fourth grade, huh? How much more would you make if you taught eighth grade?"

What is sufficient for the social studies teacher who must work in poor conditions, striving mightily to find some good in the child whose home life offers nothing but dismal failure, and trying to satisfy a hyper- and hypocritical public? That is, what is sufficient for the teacher who jestingly is viewed as a "person hired to tell lies to little children", who is to act as a museum of virtues practicing ideals which "the majority of adults more or less frankly disavow for themselves but want others to practice?"[1]

What is sufficient for the social studies teacher who is committed, but demoralized; an idealist who wants students to succeed and believes they can, but feels his or her confidence ebb away daily? What will help the teacher who feels the need to compromise ideals to survive the tedium of an uncomfortable workplace?

What is sufficient for the teacher who, despite jogging, health foods, and a disguised receding hairline, is aging? Recall the story about the crying six year old whose teacher asked what was the matter. The child answered, "I don't like school and I have to stay here until I'm sixteen." "Don't let that worry you," said the teacher, "I have to stay here until I am 65!"

Indeed, we are aging, either too rapidly or not rapidly enough. But the question is: as we get older, are we getting better?

Obviously, there are no simple answers to any of these questions, any more than there is a fountain of youth or pill that will transform our students into enthusiastic geniuses whose parents gratefully bestow free trips to Aruba on us. Still, there are ways to prepare and sustain the kinds of elementary social studies teachers we all admire.

First, preservice and inservice must be seen as fitting into a continuum. However, it is typical to separate the two, to suggest that one learns to be a teacher once on the job; that teacher education is simply a series of "Mickey Mouse" courses one should forget upon gaining certification. Teachers pass through phases, just as we do throughout our lifetimes. The initial enthusiasm that carried us as teachers gives way to the more sustaining knowledge and skills we develop through experience. Is the one to be judged necessarily better than the other?

Second, early in the preservice phase we must benefit from research. For example, the research of Frances Fuller more than a decade ago evinced clear evidence that the effective teacher is more concerned with students than self or the role of teacher.[2] Consider how many initiates fail in the classroom because they tend to let the role of teacher get in the way of teaching. "Red pen power," is the way one person expressed it. Those who would become teachers must first develop self confidence, then adjust to the role of teacher, a new role, so that both the self and the role of teacher are submerged to meeting the needs of the students; however impossible or unloveable they may be at times.

Third, despite the fact that teaching does not meet the usual criteria for a profession — control over entry, control over conditions, control over the clients, and control over the quality of those with whom we work — teaching, nonetheless, bears many of the marks of a profession. The key is the attitude we take with us into teaching. Do we see ourselves as professionals? Do we recognize that it is something not everyone can do; that we are a cut above? If we do not, we have failed to reach the first rung of the ladder to being a professional.

In this regard, consider the attitude in the following passage from which the title of this article is borrowed:

> It has taken us teachers a long time to reach the reluctant conclusion that professionalism...is like garlic or pregnancy. There is no such thing as a <u>little</u> garlic or a <u>little</u> pregnancy. Either you are or you are not a professional. It involves not only privileges, but also responsibilities: responsibilities to the student first of all, then to the students' parents, to the school, and to the community...[3]

This professional is one who strives for excellence; who measures worth, not in terms of comparisons with others, but "between myself at my best and myself at my worst."[4] Patricia

Cross[4] suggests that we can learn what business is learning the hard way; namely, that excellence comes from trusting people, not the system.[5] For McDonalds, producers of the lowly hamburger, to IBM, the epitome of high tech, excellence is not in the prestige of the product, but in the "apparently ordinary" people stimulated to unusual effort.

These "apparently ordinary" people are encouraged to work in an atmosphere of decentralization and autonomy, where "a measure of tidiness" gives way to "achieve regular innovation."[6] That is, there is no one model or solution to achieving excellence -- it is a spirit that becomes contagious when one is enthusiastic about what one does; whether selling McDonald's hamburgers or helping students to clarify and articulate their thinking.

Further, these "apparently ordinary" people are encouraged to attain goals, not to fail. They are not berated for poor performance, nor told, as teachers and schools too often are, that they are an embarrassment and a risk to the nation. Our administrators too, must be encouraged to realize that dysfunction is the result of only looking for failure. The notion of the self-fulfilling prophesy is particularly relevant. We can create winners or losers by the way we view teachers. Tell us we are failures as teachers, and we can come to believe it. Stress the notion that we teachers are "burnt out," and we will feel burnt out.

Fourth, if we are to attain the necessary excellence in the classroom, preservice and inservice teachers must enjoy opportunities for renewal. In this regard, we need models upon which to focus occasionally. There must be opportunities to practice new behaviors under the guidance of, or at least support of, others. Almost two decades ago, a model for team observations was suggested. That is, teams of preservice or inservice teachers observed each other in cycles. It was a nonthreatening experience in which one teacher invited others to observe a class and to report only the way in which the teacher being observed managed to alter the stimuli in the classroom to maintain interest and to motivate. No evaluation was intended, nor any rewards suggested. It was an opportunity for one teacher to benefit from supportive colleagues; to watch another in action and to pick up some ideas for one's own classroom.

The key was to help teachers learn ways to assess themselves in the classroom; to see how they measure up to their expectations for themselves. Research done at the University of Michigan clearly indicated that career teachers tended to measure their success in terms of recognition from others with whom they work but they also needed ways to judge their own effectiveness.[7] Self assessment, then, is a critical component of how teachers perceive their teaching; not the extrinsic rewards that might prevail in other occupations.

Fifth, is the suggestion that teachers assist each other quite directly. One model used in Columbia, Missouri, involves a teacher assistance team, in which elected faculty act as an in-house consultancy.[8] The team is activated by a colleague who senses a problem with his or her teaching or who simply wants ideas for improvement. One team member chairs the team, collects information to help the team, and then calls the team together to make recommendations. The colleague who sought the help then meets with the chair or the whole team in private to listen to the suggestions. The colleague is free to select from the suggestions or to reject them. Again, no evaluation is suggested, nor is there coercion. It is intended to be a self assessment, using appropriate nonthreatening resources.

Sixth, inservice courses, including those offered in New York City by NYSUT, such as "Effective Teaching" and "Cooperative Learning," are means for self renewal. Research by N. L. Gage clearly indicates that inservice education is effective in bringing about significant change on the part of "trained teachers."[9] It is important, however, that these courses recognize the causal relation between teaching practices and student achievement, attitude and conduct. Clearly, there ought to be attention to the K-6 Social Studies Curriculum: the

concepts and skills that are to be learned. For example, consideration ought to be given to models of teaching concepts, such as Hilda Taba's Inductive Learning model and Jerome Bruner's Concept Attainment model.[10] Teachers need to work with these models, apply them to their classes, and weigh the advantages and disadvantages.

It is obvious that none of the above suggestions implies changes in the organization of the school, in pay scales, in the status of teachers, or in problems posed by our society. To call for wholesale changes in any of these, simply avoids the problem, for these changes are slow to come, if they ever do. Rather, it is necessary to work within the existing constraints while working to change them, and we must recognize that teaching is a service-oriented occupation. Business is reluctantly realizing that, and making appropriate changes. Excellence can be attained by encouraging workers to measure their worth against their own standards of what is their best. Teaching is even more client-oriented, and we need to be reminded of this. We can be the professionals who realize we are the vital connection between the formal school and youths whose learning is highly personal and idiosyncratic.

The preservice phase is where we begin to take on the role of teacher, where we work with our first teacher models, and where we learn that there is no such thing as a little garlic or pregnancy. We either are or are not a teacher, oriented to serving students and to self renewal. With that beginning, we are much more likely to respond to the challenges of teaching in often hostile environments and help to make them conducive to learning. Failure to do so, likely, will simply subject us to more quick fixes of testing, a minimally satisfying curriculum of "basics," more criticism, and, not too many years hence, a new cry for reform to remedy the mistakes we are making now.

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